

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUDAPE 02748 251117Z

42

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FBO-02 A-01 L-03 /019 W

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P 250825Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4024

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FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ABLD, HU

SUBJECT: RENOVATION OF USG-OWNED PROPERTY 03244, ZRINYI UTCA 4

1. ADMIN OFFICER HAS RECEIVED LETTER FROM EMBASSY'S HUNGARIAN LEGAL COUNSELOR, DR. CSABA SZENT-IVANYI, REQUESTING ON BEHALF OF HUNGARIAN AUTHORITIES AUTHORIZATION TO RENOVATE EXTERIOR OSNUSG-OWNED BUILDINGHAT ZRINYI UTCA 4 (PROPERTY 03244). NEITHER COURTYARD NOR FRONT FACADE OF BUILDING HAVE BEEN RENOVATED FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS. CONSEQUENTLY, BUILDING IS IN BAD SHAPE EVEN BY HUNGARIAN STANDARDS. BUILDING, PRESENTLY OCCUPIED BY MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, HAS BEEN DESIGNATED A NATIONAL MONUMENT BY GOH. PRESENT TENANTS HAVE REPEATEDLY REQUESTED STRUCTURE BE REPAIRED.

2. DR. SZENT-IVANYI HAS OBTAINED PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE OF 648,007 FORINTS (\$31,842) FOR REPAIR OF CENTRAL COURTYARD FACADE. HE HAS NOT, HOWEVER, OBTAINED ESTIMATES FOR RENOVATION OF COURTYARD ITSELF, AIR SHAFTS, OR FRONT FACADE. WORK CAN BE PAID FOR BY RENT COLLECTED FROM TENANT AND THUS WOULD INVOLVE NO OUTLAY OF U.S. APPROPRIATED FUNDS. IT IS WELL KNOWN IN BUDAPEST THAT USG OWNS THIS PROPERTY IN DOWNTOWN PEST AND OTHERS IN PRESTIGIOUS CASTLE HILL DISTRICT OF BUDA MOST OF WHICH ARE IN EQUALLY DILAPIDATED CONDITION. FOR EXAMPLE, PROPERTY NO. 10244 AT TANCICS MIHALY UT 9, A DESIGNATED HUNGARIAN NATIONAL MONUMENT, THE SITE OF THE JAIL WHERE KOSSUTH'S 1848 COLLEAGUES

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PAGE 02 BUDAPE 02748 251117Z

WERE IMPRISONED, ONLY TWO DOORS DISTANT FROM LUXURIOUS

HILTON HOTEL NOW NEARING COMPLETION IS REAL EYESORE.

3. RECALLING 1959 "EXPROPRIATION" OF PREMISES AT ROOSEVELT TER, EMBASSY BELIEVES WE SHOULD NOT INVITE ANOTHER EXPROPRIATION BY REFUSAL TO MAKE NECESSARY REPAIRS. IN ANY CASE, AS DEPARTMENT UNDOUBTEDLY KNOWS, UNDER HUNGARIAN LAW TENANT HAS RIGHT, SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES, TO MAKE NEEDED REPAIRS AND TO DEDUCT COSTS FROM RENTAL PAYMENTS. THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE TENANTS WILL DO PRECISELY THIS IF USG REFUSES TO AUTHORIZE REPAIRS THAT ARE OBVIOUSLY LONG OVERDUE. IN ANY EVENT, WHEN PROPERTY IS EVENTUALLY DISPOSED OF, ITS VALUE WILL CERTAINLY BE INCREASED BY THIS WORK.

4. FYI: IN VERY NEAR FUTURE WE MAY EXPECT TO HAVE SIMILAR REQUEST PUT TO US BY DIPLOMATIC SERVICE DIRECTORATE FOR RENOVATION OF FACADE OF EMBASSY PROPERTY AT VIGYAZO FRENC UTCA 3 (PROPERTY NO. 03244).

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY JUDGES THAT THIS REQUEST FOR REPAIRS IS LEGITIMATE AND JUSTIFIED. WHETHER REQUEST MADE BY HUNGARIANS, ZAMBIANS OR CANADIANS, NO IMPARTIAL OBSERVER CAN DENY THAT DECADES OF UNDERSTANDABLY DELIVERATE NEGLECT HAVE TAKEN THEIR TOLL. SINCE NEED IS PATENT, SINCE SUM INVOLVED IS SMALL AND SINCE NO U.S. APPROPRIATED FUNDS ARE INVOLVED, WE WISH TO DISPOSE OF THIS PETTY MATTER BEFORE REPEAT BEFORE DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL'S VISIT TO BUDAPEST ON SEPTEMBER 14-SEPTEMBER 16. IT WOULD, IN OUR VIEW, BE EMBARRASSING TO USG IF GOH WERE TO RAISE THIS TRIFLING MATTER WITH THE DEPUTY SECRETARY--A COURSE WHICH ONE CANNOT RULE OUT.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY PROPOSES TO RESPOND TO SZENT-IVANYI BY LETTER ON AUGUST 29 ACCEDING TO HIS REQUEST TO PROCEED WITH RENOVATION OF CENTRAL COURTYARD AND FRONT FACADES; AND IT URGENTLY REQUESTS AUTHORITY FROM THE DEPARTMENT TO TAKE THAT ACTION.  
MCAULIFFE

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**TAGS:** ABLD, HU  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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